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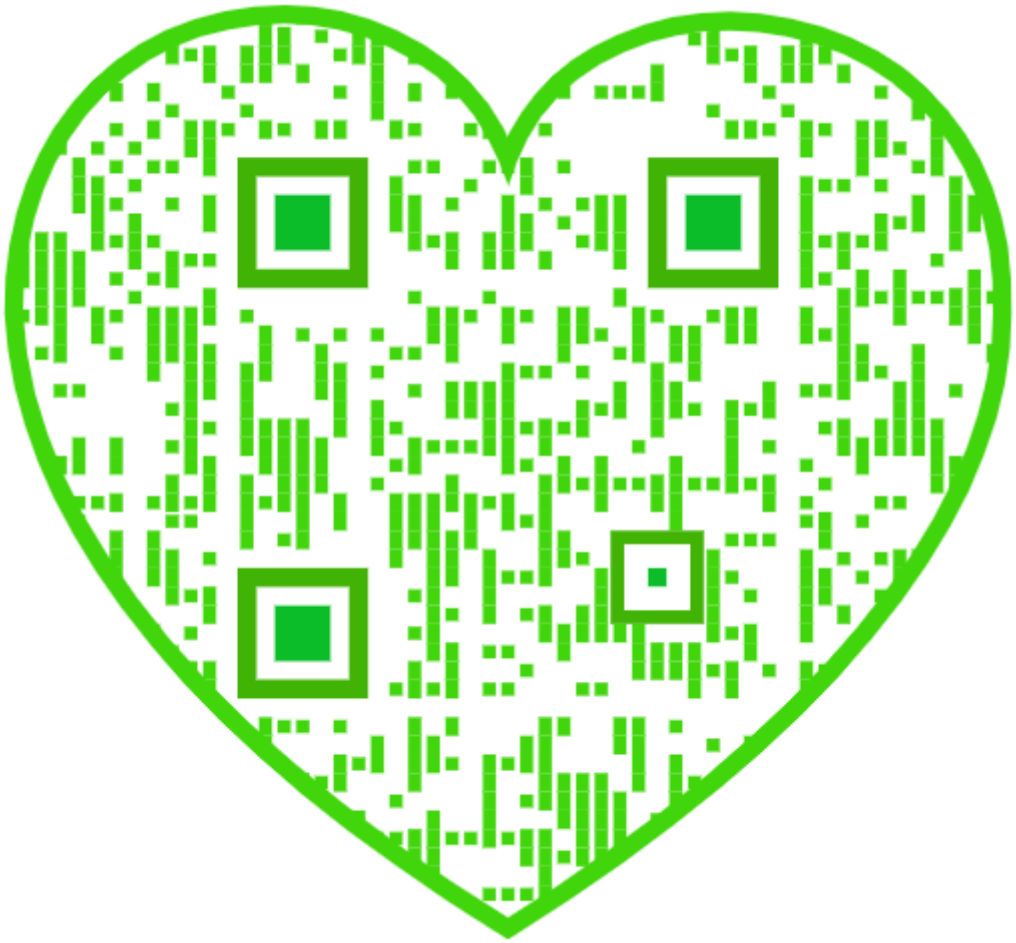

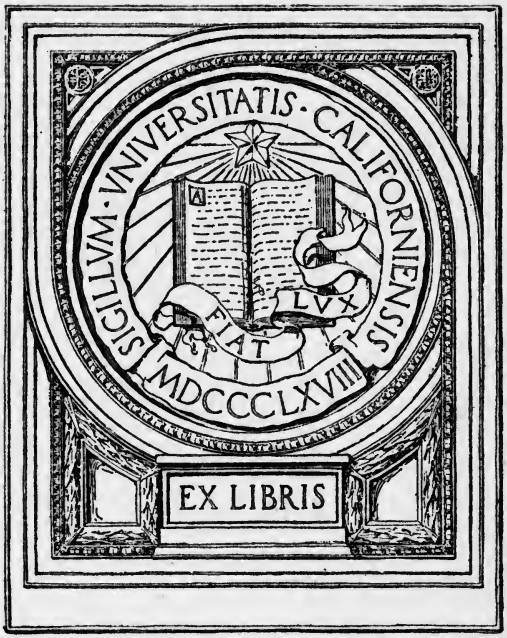
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SPANISH GLASS

IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

BY

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SPANISH GLASS

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

ALTHOUGH glass-making was one of the earliest and most important of the arts in Spain and has continued uninterruptedly down to the present time, its complete history has not as yet been written. Gerspach, who includes a brief review of the subject in his *L'Art de la Verrerie*, tells us that most of his information was given him by Baron Charles Davillier, whose death prevented the completion of two works on the glass industry of Spain and painting on glass. The literature of this craft in Spain consists principally of the mention of manufacturing centres by earlier writers in their works of a general nature, which statements have been gathered together by later authors, such as Rico y Sinobas, Juan F. Riaño, and Leonard Williams, but these accounts furnish little information regarding the exact character of the several wares which were produced at various places at different periods. The results of Riaño's researches and studies, which have been summed up in a single chapter of his *Industrial*

Arts in Spain, comprise practically all the information on the subject we possess, which has been used by the other recent chroniclers in their reference to this art. The material for the intelligent study of the subject is contained in the public and private collections of glass in Spain and elsewhere, rather than in the manuscripts and printed archives of the past, and awaits the attention of a competent specialist.

Through the fragmentary accounts which have reached us since the fourteenth century, certain important facts, relative to the condition of the art in Spain, stand out prominently. Several distinct influences appear to have been at work in different sections of the Peninsula from an early period, among which, in their due order, were the Roman, the Saracenic, the Venetian, and that of Western Europe. The development of the industry in Spain appears to have followed the course of trade from other countries and to have maintained its distinctive character through succeeding centuries, wherever it found a foothold in the Iberian Peninsula. Thus we find that in certain localities the principal characteristics originally introduced, as a rule, survive.

The manufacture, however, was not confined to useful and ornamental glassware, for we learn that

several important establishments in Spain produced, from an early time, large mirrors, lusters and painted glass windows for the embellishment of cathedrals and churches, of which may be mentioned the important examples at Toledo, Seville, Leon, and other places. Señor Rico y Sinobas gives a list of glass painters of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, whose names have been preserved in the records of the old Spanish churches and cathedrals. This phase of the subject, however, need not claim our attention here.

ROMAN GLASS

PLINY, writing in the first century A.D., informs us that in his time glass was being manufactured in Spain. Don Manuel Rico y Sinobas[1] asserts that in the Iberian-Roman period glass was made in various places in the interior, in the valleys which run from the coast of Catalonia to the Pyrenees, near the mouth of the Ebro, especially at Tortosa, also in Valencia and Murcia, in the valleys of Olleria, Salinas, Busot, and Rio Almanzora. Among the objects found in tombs of the Roman period he

[1] *Del Vidrio*, Madrid, 1873, pp. 11, 12, and 15.

enumerates small jars with handles, cups, vials without a foot but with a wide neck, pateras with gold, plates, molded saltcellars, small amphoræ, lacrymatories of many varied forms, rings,—red, yellow, and gilded,—beads, bracelets, and a multitude of trinkets.

According to Kisa,[1] the principal centre of glass-making in the Iberian Peninsula in Roman times seems to have been Taracco, where large quantities of utilitarian glassware are found, especially long-necked flasks. At other places, besides a number of engraved pieces, great quantities of ordinary glassware have been found, of which unarranged collections are preserved in museums without notes as to where found or other information as to their provenance. It is true that glass had been imported from the East long before the time of the Romans, first through the Phœnicians and then through the Greeks. In the Phocian colony of Rosas (ancient Rhoda) and the Massilian Castellon de Ampurias (Emporion) at the foot of the Pyrenees, there have been found, besides glass beads, Egyptian alabastra and other opaque glass with the fern design and wavy thread decoration. A number of beautiful pieces from Ampurias have found their way into the Zettler col-

[1] *Das Glas im Altertume*, Leipzig, 1908, p. 189.

lection in Munich. With the downfall of the Roman sovereignty, the glass industry of the country seems to have declined; Isidor of Seville (who died in 636) speaks of the glass factories of the Romans as belonging to the past.

Engraved glass is of Italian provenance. It became scattered to Portuguese soil and was there used to place in tombs. One, a small bottle with engraved view of the coast of Puteoli (Italy) and of Bajæ was found in an old Roman mine at Odemira (Portugal), in the province of Evora; others were found at Tavira (Portugal). This leads one to suppose that the industry was transplanted from the Campania (Italy), from the oldest glassworks of the West, to the Iberian Peninsula.

Riaño states that "Glass vessels of the Roman period found in Spain are similar in form and manufacture to those which we know were made in France and Italy. This is not to be wondered at, if we remember that the Romans imposed their artistic forms on the countries they conquered. It is impossible to classify the specimens of this industry into determined localities. The study of the glass paste may, at some future period, give materials for such a classification.

"One special characteristic of Roman glass may

be taken into account to be applied to Spanish glass of a later period. We find ancient specimens constantly ornamented with a sort of thread or line which runs all over the vase. These lines are sometimes made of transparent glass, and sometimes of white opaque glass, termed in Italy *latticinio* from its milky whiteness. When the industry of glass making was revived in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, classical forms were copied in this as in other industries; this line ornamentation was copied on a much smaller scale in Italy than in Spain, where it constituted the chief and constant characteristic of glass making. It is an interesting fact that objects of a traditional Moorish form have the greatest amount of lines of this style of ornamentation. We cannot, until this subject is more thoroughly investigated, do otherwise than infer either that the tradition of this industry was preserved in Spain, or that the Arabs imported this style of decoration from the same localities from which it had been copied by the Romans centuries before."[1]

The collection of Roman glass in the Hispanic Museum belongs to the second century and comes from two localities—Italica and Carmona. The

[1] *The Industrial Arts in Spain*, South Kensington Art Handbook, 1879, p. 229

material from the former place was exhumed from Roman graves by Mr. Archer M. Huntington, and consists of bottles, bowls, etc., of the same character as the glass which has been found in Italy, and elsewhere.

After the Roman period the glass produced in Spain may be roughly divided into three classes: (1.) Showing Eastern influence; (2.) showing Italian influence; (3.) showing Silesian or Bohemian influence.

1. The glass of Southern Spain reveals the influence of the nearer East. This is particularly true of the products of the provinces of Granada, Andalusia, Murcia, and Almería.

2. On the northeastern coast, at Barcelona and throughout the province of Catalonia, at Mataró, Almatret, and Cervelló, the glass of Venice, or Murano, was taken as model, the result of the extensive importation of Italian glass and glassworkers in the fifteenth century and later. The production of glass in Venetian style also extended into the interior to Cadalso, Recuenco, Cebreros, Valdemaqueda, and San Martin de Valdeiglesias.

3. At La Granja de Ildefonso a style of glass was developed in the eighteenth century which, while presenting elements of originality, was evidently

derived from the cut and gilded glass of Bohemia or Silesia.

While glass was made at many places, of more or less importance, throughout Spain, the principal centres of the manufacture, during the sixteenth century and later, were Almería, Catalonia, and Cadalso.

ALMERÍA (Province of Almería)

THAT glass was produced at Almería and María in the southeastern part of Spain during the Mohammedan domination is shown by Al-Makkari the Arabian author of *Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (London 1840), quoting Ash Shakandi, an Oriental writer of the thirteenth century, who wrote: "Almería was also famous for the fabrication of all sorts of vases and utensils, whether of iron, copper, or glass."[1] The glass produced in the provinces of Almería and Granada was often of an Oriental character in which Persian forms were strongly marked, revealing none of the influence of Italy. It was usually of a dark green color, a striking peculiarity being the multiplicity of handles,—two, four, eight, or more in number,—which were serrated and covered

[1] *The Industrial Arts in Spain*, by Juan F. Riaño, p. 230.

with rustic projections, irregularly branched like the twigs of a tree. This exuberance of ornamentation suggests the method employed by modern glass-blowers of melting canes of glass over a flame and attaching them to the surface while in a plastic state. Among the forms produced there are globular jars, vases, bowls, and pilgrim bottles, profusely decorated with spines and ridges, buttons, trellis-work and encircling threads.

"At Almería, which was celebrated for its glass industry as early as the thirteenth century," says a recent writer, "a peculiar style of glassware was made, the forms of which have been partially preserved down to the present day. Here we find the original forms of the native glass mingled with Oriental forms and decorative motives. The most popular are examples of bulbous shape decorated with knobs, threads, and rosettes, with wide funnel-shaped necks and a number of handles, which latter are decorated with an irregular, pinched, comb-like ornamentation. . . . The collection of the Berlin Museum contains several of these bizarre, fantastic pieces, all of which, however, probably date from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. The composition of this glass is poor; the colour varies from the palest olive green to the deepest blue green;

violet (purple) and brown decorations are not rare."[1]

In the collections of Señor G. J. de Osma of Madrid and the Victoria and Albert Museum of South Kensington are numerous examples from María. These are distinguished by four marked features, viz.: Green or olive colored glass; threads of glass encircling the surface; handles with serrations or rustic projections; and, most characteristic of all, a chain pattern in relief, which encircles many of the vases and bottles (see Plate IV.).

According to Leonard Williams: "Almería was probably the most important centre of Spanish-Moorish glass-making, and is mentioned in connection with this craft by Al-Makkari. The oriental shape of the older vessels which were made in this locality is still preserved in certain objects such as jars, bowls, flasks and *aguardiente*-bottles, which are still manufactured, or were so until quite recently, throughout a region extending from Almería to the slopes of the Alpujarra.

"None of the original Moorish glass of the Alhambra has survived till nowadays. Most of it was destroyed by the explosion, in the year 1590, of a powder factory which lay immediately beneath the

[1] *Das Glas*, Handbook of the Kunstgewerbe Museum, Berlin, 1912, p. 367, by Robert Schmidt.

palace and beside the river Darro. In the Alhambra archives particular mention is made of the circular glass windows or 'eyes,' only the corresponding holes of which remain, in the baths of the same palace. This glass, which may have been in colour, was also destroyed by the explosion, as were the windows, 'painted in colour with fancy devices and Arabic lettering' of the Sala de Embajadores, those of the Hall of the Two Sisters, and certain windows, 'painted with many histories and royal arms,' belonging to the church of the Alhambra."[1]

BARCELONA (Province of Catalonia)

GLASS was produced at several places in Catalonia, in northeastern Spain, particularly at Barcelona, at an early period. Señor Juan F. Riaño[2] states that as far back as 1324 an edict was issued prohibiting the establishment of glass factories inside the city limits. A glass-makers' guild was formed in 1455, which was in existence at least until 1659, St. Bernardino being its patron saint. Jeronimo Paulo wrote in 1491 that glassware, which could compare favorably with that of Venice, was extensively exported to Rome.

[1] *The Arts and Crafts of Older Spain*, p. 231 *et seq.*

[2] *The Industrial Arts in Spain*, South Kensington Museum Art Handbook, 1890 Edition, p. 234.

Gerspach[1] informs us that on June 8, 1475, the Catholic Queen Isabel conceded to the monks of the convent of San Geronimo de Guisando the privilege of establishing a glass furnace at Venta de los Toros de Guisando, with exemption from the duties, or tax on sales, and in 1503 Ferdinand the Catholic sent to Queen Isabel two hundred and seventy-four pieces of glass of Barcelona which were worthy of their high destination. This glass attracted the attention of the Venetian Ambassador, Navagaro, who visited Spain in 1523 where he saw several pieces presented by the princess to the royal chapel in the Cathedral of Granada. An inventory taken during the reign of Philip II. mentions, under the heading "Bidrios de Barcelona," one hundred and nineteen pieces of glass of various forms, among which were some enameled lamps.

This fabric is referred to in the highest terms by other authors, among whom was Marineus Siculus, who, writing early in the sixteenth century, stated that "the best glass made in Spain is that of Barcelona." Vases, rose-water vessels, cups, and other objects were provided with crinkled and serrated ornamentation and handles which varied in number from two to four or more. The rose-water sprinkler

[1] *L'Art de la Verrerie*, p. 300.

(*borracha*) was often diagonally striated and possessed two tubes (one for filling and one for emptying) and a ring handle at the top. These vessels were carried by women to sprinkle rose water in religious processions. This Spanish glass, however, was usually thicker and heavier than the Italian and of more clumsy modeling.

Rare specimens of glass with enamel painting have been found in Spain which have been attributed to Barcelona. They date from the latter part of the fifteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century. This variety of glass suggests an Eastern origin both in the shapes and the colors of the enamels, which include dark red, brown, black, yellow, blue, green, and white. The green color predominates and is usually of a peculiar yellowish tint. The Saracenic influence is shown in the designs, such as dogs, hares, deer, birds, and foliage. Fine examples of this variety are preserved in the museums of London, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Paris, Venice, and Berlin. In the Kunstgewerbe Museum of the last city is a *tazza* or circular dish decorated with figures of dogs and birds and foliage in enamel colors and in Saracenic style. Similar examples are in the collections of Señor G. J. de Osma of Madrid and Señor Emilio Cabot of Barcelona. The Victoria and Albert

Museum, London, contains a *tazza* with a white bird as the central ornament, surrounded by festoons of lily-like flowers and foliage in green, blue, and yellow. Two stags and two hounds in white enamel occupy the outside space, arranged alternately at equidistant points, while a second piece, of similar character, bears a white mask in the centre with surrounding flowers and leaves in green and yellow. All of these are attributed to the sixteenth century.

Edward Dillon, in his book on *Glass* mentions a beautiful example of Spanish enameled glass in the Museo Civico at Venice. It is a small flask which came from the Maglione collection at Naples. The characteristic apple green enamel is relieved by yellowish foliage and red and white birds.

Two-handled circular flasks, or vases, of flattened form, with bell-shaped mouth, surmounting a spreading foot are among the most characteristic objects of this provenance and period and fine examples are included in the Osma, Cabot, and South Kensington collections (see Frontispiece).

At Barcelona, during the eighteenth century, opaque milk-white glass with rudely painted decorations was produced quite extensively, and much of this was made for exportation to the East, to Mexico

and other countries. The principal forms were drinking mugs, flasks, etc.

CADALSO (Province of Toledo)

IN 1517, Marineus Siculus stated in his *De las Cosas Memorables de España* that "Glass was made in several towns of Castile, the most important of them being Cadalso, which supplied the whole kingdom."[1] The glass made there was, as described by Mendez Silva in 1645, "of beautiful colours and forms, which can compete with the Venetian."[1] "In the latter end of the seventeenth century this industry began to fall off, until it was revived by Don Antonio Obando in 1692, and glass of all sorts was made there as before. This revival lasted until the middle of the last century, at which time glass ceased altogether to be worked there."[2] A vase of the seventeenth century, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is richly mottled in various colors, having two large scroll-shaped handles terminating at the lower ends in rosettes. Ewers, bowls, cups and saucers, drinking cups, and bottles were among the

[1] Quoted by Riaño, p. 238.

[2] Introduction to the Catalogue of the Art Objects of Spanish Production in the South Kensington Museum by Señor Juan F. Riaño, 1872.

objects produced there which reveal a strong Venetian influence. Some of these possess considerable elegance of form and are quite thin, a favorite style of ornamentation being pebbled effects, bands and lines of red, blue, and green on a milk-white ground. Imitations of precious stones were also among the productions of Cadalso.

SAN MARTÍN DE VALDEIGLESIAS (Province of Madrid)

GLASS of fine quality, in the Venetian style, was being produced in 1680 at San Martin de Valdeiglesias, under the direction of a Belgian glass-worker, Diodonet Lambot, at a factory established by the Duke of Villahermosa. After his death in 1683, Lambot was succeeded by Santiago Vandoleto, under whose management the manufacture declined, but under the superintendency of Don Antonio Obando, a few years later, the quality of the Valdeiglesias products was greatly improved.

Glass in the Venetian style was also produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at Cebreros, province of Segovia; Valdemaqueda, province of Avila; and at Mataró, Almatret, and Cervelló, in Cataluña. The glass of Mataró was so celebrated that when foreign princes travelled in Spain the king

had a galley conduct them to that place to visit the glassworks there.

LA GRANJA DE SAN ILDEFONSO

AN important manufactory was established by Don Juan de Goyeneche in 1720 in the province of Toledo at a place called Nuevo Baztán. Much of the glass made there was exported to America, principally to Mexico and to other foreign parts. Ventura Sit, who had been employed there, as stated by Leonard Williams,[1] decided to found a glassworks at La Granja. "Here is the royal summer residence of San Ildefonso, and Sit was fortunate enough to secure at the outset—that is, in 1728—the firm protection of Philip the Fifth and of his consort, Isabel Farnese." Here mirrors, chandeliers, and other objects were produced for royal use. In 1771, one Eder, a Swedish glass-worker, and Sivert, a Frenchman, directed the work of making the smaller and more elaborate articles and the productions of the factory were greatly improved. Bottles and other objects of a useful and ornamental character continued to be made and a characteristic style was developed after the French and German methods.

[1] *The Arts and Crafts of Older Spain*, vol. ii., p. 252.

The glass itself was of a somewhat inferior quality but the decorations were elaborate, consisting of richly cut and engraved devices such as flowers, inscriptions, and views, reheightened with gold, the invention of Sigismund Brun, who originally came from Hanover and directed the manufacture of the plainest glass. A large number of workmen and artists were employed there until about 1828, when the works passed into private hands and were closed about 1849. Among the cut and gilded articles produced at La Granja under royal protection were vases with two handles and covers, bottles, tumblers, drinking mugs, and covered bowls. The flattened four-sided bottles with cut or engraved decorations bear a strong resemblance to the large flasks of German or Dutch origin, which, in the eighteenth century, were made to be fitted into liquor cases in sets of six to twelve. Some of the Spanish bottles are of enormous size and elaborately ornamented with richly cut patterns.

Swinburne, writing in 1776, describes the walls of the great audience-chamber of the royal palace at Madrid as being "hung with large plates of looking-glass in rich frames. The manufactory of glass is at Saint Ildefonso, where they cast them of a very great size, but I am told they are apt to turn out

much rougher and more full of flaws than those of France."[1]

This style of glass was introduced into Mexico by the Spaniards, some of whom may have come from La Granja. It is to be presumed that glass of this character was sent from Spain into Mexico, but it is certain that it was also, at a little later date, made in Puebla in great quantities and today it is found throughout Mexico in abundance. Among the prevailing forms of Spanish glass are pulque tumblers of enormous size, many of them being twelve inches or more in height, and two-handled vases varying in dimensions from six to fifteen inches. These objects were ornamented in three ways. 1. They were simply cut into decorative designs, such as rosettes, floral and foliated patterns, birds, etc. without gilding or coloring. 2. The cutting was frequently covered with gilding. 3. The pieces, probably at a later date, were superficially painted over the gilding in various colors. A large tumbler in the Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, is embellished in this manner with floral subjects and medallions enclosing polychrome heads of some of the more noted rulers of Mexico.

[1] Quoted by Leonard Williams in *The Arts and Crafts of Older Spain*, vol. ii., p. 253.

The collection of glass in the museum of the Hispanic Society of America, while limited in extent, is fairly representative of the Roman period and of the various styles which originated at the principal seats of Spanish manufacture in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to Excmo. Sr. Don G. J. de Osma, of Madrid, for helpful suggestions in the preparation of these pages.

CATALOGUE

1. VASE

Height, 9¼ inches.

Flattened disc-like body, with long funnel-shaped neck, from which spring two slender figure 2-shaped handles, and resting on a small spreading foot. The decoration on either side consists of crudely painted figures,—a bridal pair,—standing between fir-like trees, above which are birds. The costumes of the figures are those of the sixteenth century. The enamel colors—light green, yellow, and white—have been applied thickly and stand out in marked relief, the handles being touched with gold.

Barcelona, Spain, sixteenth century.

See Frontispiece.

2. POKAL, OR GOBLET

Height, 7¾ inches.

Bell-shaped bowl and stem with central bulb, terminating in a trumpet-shaped foot. The deco-

ration consists of bands of enamel in flame-like ornaments, alternating with vertical dashes, at upper and lower edges of the bowl, and on the stem; beneath the upper rim are two bands of conventional scroll and festoon designs; surrounding the stem bulb is a circle of S-shaped motives separated by dots, while around the expanded foot are bold ornaments resembling conventionalized fleur de lis. The color of the glass is blue, the ornamentation being green, rose, and white enamel, with touches of gold. This chalice-like form of cup occurs in Arab glass, and is frequently found in the productions of Murano, of the seventeenth century and later. Gerspach[1] figures two enameled glasses of this type with Arabic inscriptions, which he attributes to the thirteenth century. One is in the Chartres Museum, the other in the museum at Douai. The former is decorated in white and blue enriched with gold. The inscription is in gold in Neski characters and has been translated "Enduring glory, long life exempt from disease, favorable fortune always, great prosperity." The inscription on the Douai chalice has, on account of its fantastic character, not yet been deciphered. The form

[1] *L'Art de la Verrerie*, Paris, 1885.

appears to have been copied at some of the Spanish glass centres where the Italian influence was strongly marked. The decoration of the Hispanic cup, in colored enamels, is bold and heavy and indicates Spanish treatment rather than Venetian, and we are inclined to attribute it to Barcelona or one of the Catalonian factories of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

PLATE II

3. BEAKER, OR POKAL BOWL

Height, 4 inches; Diameter of Brim, 5¾ inches.

Of clear, colorless glass, with widely flaring sides and small flat base. The reticulated surface pattern is traced in white enamel, with brown, green, and yellow dots in the meshes. The brim is embellished on the under side with green oak leaves surrounded by white traceries, touched with gold. Evidently the upper part of a goblet, whose stem and foot are missing. The scar on the base plainly shows that it has been broken from its support. Probably of Barcelona origin, in Venetian style, showing Arabic influence, and may be ascribed to the seventeenth century.

PLATE III

4. FLASK

Height, 6¾ inches.

Flattened form, spiral threads around shoulder, chain-like band of triangular figures below. Thick, olive green glass.

From Maria, province of Almería, early seventeenth century. PLATE IV

5. CUP

Height, 5⅛ inches.

Globular body, standing on flat, circular foot. Band of chain pattern around lower part, in relief. Crimped and winged handle. Colorless glass of yellowish tint, showing Venetian influence. Spanish, probably Catalonian, eighteenth century. PLATE V

6. SUGAR BOWL

Height, 7½ inches.

Standing on foot, having cover and two handles. Colorless glass, cut and gilded festoon design around centre.

La Granja de San Ildefonso, Spain, eighteenth century. PLATE VI

7. TUMBLER

Height, 5¾ inches.

Cylindrical form, fluted below; cut and gilded decoration.

La Granja de San Ildefonso, Spain, eighteenth century. PLATE VII

8. BOTTLE, OR DECANTER

Height, 12⅜ inches.

Tall, slender form. The decorations consist of bold floral designs, cut and gilded; on neck a circle of gilded stars.

La Granja de San Ildefonso, Spain, eighteenth century. PLATE VIII

9. MUG

Height, 5½ inches.

Flaring at top; one handle; decorated with floral sprays in gold.

La Granja de San Ildefonso, Spain, eighteenth century. PLATE IX

10. VASE

Height, 12 inches.

Bulbous body; cylindrical collar; spreading foot; two handles; cut and gilded festoon decoration on sides.

La Granja de San Ildefonso, Spain, eighteenth century. PLATE X

(Vases of this type are found in abundance in Mexico, many of which have been brought from Spain, while some were produced, under Spanish influence, at Puebla, Mexico.)

POKAL, OR GOBLET
Barcelona
Late Seventeenth Century

PLATE III.

BEAKER, OR POKAL BOWL
Barcelona
Seventeenth Century

PLATE IV

FLASK
Maria
Province of Almería

PLATE V

CUP
Probably Catalonian

PLATE VI

SUGAR BOWL
San Ildefonso

PLATE VII

TUMBLER
San Ildefonso

BOTTLE, OR DECANTER
San Ildefonso

PLATE IX

MUG
San Ildefonso

PLATE X

VASE
San Ildefonso

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